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Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/173.

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Report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 65/173 on promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection. Ecotourism, a term used to describe tourism for appreciation of natural areas and associated traditional cultures, follows the principles of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. It applies to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism subsectors, including ecotourism. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the participants recognized the need to support sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building that promoted environmental awareness, conserved and protected the environment and improved the welfare and livelihoods of local communities.

In preparing the present report, the secretariat of the World Tourism Organization sought and used input from States Members of the United Nations, relevant specialized agencies, United Nations bodies and other international organizations, in addition to reviewing their existing relevant initiatives and projects. Several United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other international organizations have programmes or support activities that are relevant to the ecotourism, nature-based tourism, rural tourism and community-based tourism elements of the tourism sector, poverty alleviation and environmental protection.

With regard to tourism and poverty alleviation, key lessons learned are that, if poor people and local and indigenous communities are to be able to benefit from the opportunities offered by tourism, there is a need to take into account commercial and market factors, which affect the successful development of tourism in any area, and to address wider constraints that keep people in poverty. Furthermore, given that the market for tourism is highly dynamic, it is important for national tourism plans and policies to take into account market trends and to focus on those subsectors of tourism in which they have a competitive advantage, as well as to ensure that tourism activities and development are sustainable in the long term.

The present report provides recommendations to assist in promoting sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, as a tool for fighting poverty and promoting sustainable development and environmental protection.

I. Introduction

1. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations system vested with a central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. In General Assembly resolution 65/173 on promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection, the Secretary-General was requested to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, in collaboration with UNWTO and other relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, a report on the implementation of the resolution, including recommendations on ways and means to promote ecotourism as a tool for fighting poverty and promoting sustainable development. UNWTO was subsequently requested to take the lead in the preparation of the report.

2. UNWTO sought and used input from States Members of the United Nations, relevant specialized agencies, United Nations bodies and other international organizations, in addition to reviewing their existing relevant initiatives and projects. The present report is based on the responses received and information acquired through this process and on relevant publications and documents of UNWTO and other United Nations agencies and institutions. A total of 48 Member States responded to the questionnaire, including 13 least developed countries, 8 small island developing States and 14 African countries, as follows: Australia, Austria, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Latvia, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Nicaragua, Niger, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

3. The importance of the subject and the timeliness of its consideration is underscored by the fact that, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, the participants recognized in the outcome document, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288, the need to support sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building that promoted environmental awareness, conserved and protected the environment and improved the welfare and livelihoods of local communities. They also encouraged the promotion of investment in sustainable tourism, including ecotourism and cultural tourism, to assist in that regard.

A. Definitions of ecotourism and sustainable tourism[1]

4. Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism subsectors, including ecotourism. Sustainability principles refer to the

[1] This section is based on a publication by UNWTO and UNEP: *Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy-Makers* (Madrid and Paris, 2005).

environmental, economic and sociocultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Thus, sustainable tourism should:

(a) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity;

(b) Respect the sociocultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance;

(c) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socioeconomic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

5. The development of sustainable tourism requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders and strong political leadership in order to ensure wide participation and consensus-building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous effort that requires constant monitoring of impacts and the taking of preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure that tourists have a meaningful experience, raising their awareness of sustainability issues and sustainable tourism practices.

B. Relationship between ecotourism, sustainable tourism and nature-based tourism and its evolution over the past decade

6. There have been major changes within the tourism sector over the past decade, including changes to the types of tourism demanded by consumers, the development of tourism from emerging markets, the expansion of the tourism sector into new areas and changes in the way in which tourism products are marketed to and purchased by consumers, in particular through the Internet. The same period has seen widespread recognition throughout the tourism sector of the need for sustainable tourism and for action to implement sustainable tourism practices, as demonstrated by the establishment of the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development, which is supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNWTO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).[2]

7. Over the past decade, Governments, the tourism sector, destinations and other stakeholders have recognized the importance of ensuring the sustainability of all forms of tourism, including ecotourism. Tourism businesses and Governments have become aware of the effects of tourism on host communities and environments and have begun to implement practices and policies to increase the benefits to host communities and to minimize the adverse impacts on the environment.

8. Input received from Member States shows that ecotourism, just as all other tourism subsectors, is viewed within the framework of sustainable tourism. This is consistent with paragraphs 130 and 131 of the outcome document of the United

[2] See www.toinitiative.org.

Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which deal with sustainable tourism. The input received indicates that the term "ecotourism" is used in most countries to refer to nature-based tourism in rural or protected areas and to community-based tourism and that countries have focused on all those subsectors of tourism in which they have a competitive advantage in terms of their tourism assets, market demand and ability to increase economic benefits, minimize adverse environmental effects and generate benefits for and encourage the participation of local and indigenous communities in tourism.

9. In two compilations of examples of sustainable development of ecotourism published by UNWTO in 2001 and 2003,[3] covering 110 cases, it was found that there was a broad interpretation of ecotourism. The case studies included examples of nature-based tourism, rural and agritourism, adventure tourism and cultural tourism, small luxury hotels with nature-based attractions, ecotour and adventure-tour operators, private reserves and conservation areas, and community-based tourism. In 2012, UNWTO also prepared a compendium of best practices and recommendations for ecotourism in Asia and the Pacific on the basis of an assessment of the practices of 26 ecotourism organizations and private companies and six national initiatives in that region. The compendium illustrates how tourism operators are aiming to meet the principles of sustainable tourism, as benchmarked against the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (see para. 25 of the present report). The organizations and companies assessed included a national park, lodges, resorts, hotels and tour operators.

10. Detailed market studies on the ecotourism subsector were conducted by UNWTO in 2001 and published in 2002, the International Year of Ecotourism. No similarly comprehensive market studies have since been conducted. The studies were carried out in seven major outbound tourism markets: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The overall conclusions reached were that the use of the term "ecotourism" in marketing and promotion by tour operators remained relatively limited and that the tourism sector most closely matching the concept of ecotourism represented a relatively small share of the market.

11. Demand for tourism is rising rapidly, with global growth in international tourism predicted to average between 3 and 4 per cent per annum over the coming decade.[4] Domestic tourism has the potential to grow even more quickly. Such growth increases the demand for development of new tourism facilities, with consequent changes in land use, and puts pressure on local communities and environmental resources in areas in which such development is taking place. Much of this demand is driven by the private sector, which has an important role to play in ensuring that existing and new activities and operations in the tourism sector implement sustainable tourism approaches and practices, including by making effective contributions to poverty alleviation and delivery of equitable benefits to local and indigenous communities.

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[3] UNWTO, *Sustainable Development of Ecotourism — A Compilation of Good Practices* (Madrid, 2001) and UNWTO, *Sustainable Development of Ecotourism — A Compilation of Good Practices in SMEs* (Madrid, 2003).

[4] UNWTO, *Tourism towards 2030* (Madrid, 2011).

C. Tourism and poverty alleviation

12. The objectives of poverty alleviation through tourism include generating jobs and income for poor people and communities, both directly and in the supply networks providing goods and services to tourism businesses, improving access to infrastructure and services and contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

13. UNWTO has identified seven main mechanisms through which the poor can benefit from tourism:

(a) Employment of the poor in tourism enterprises;

(b) Supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by the poor or by enterprises employing the poor;

(c) Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor (informal economy);

(d) Establishment and running of small, micro or community-based tourism enterprises or joint ventures by the poor (formal economy);

(e) Redistribution of proceeds from tax or charge on tourists or tourism enterprises;

(f) Voluntary giving and support by tourists or tourism enterprises;

(g) Investment in infrastructure stimulated by tourism also benefiting the poor in the locality, directly or through support to other sectors.[5]

14. The successful development of tourism in a locality depends on the accessibility of that locality to major sources of tourists (determined by transport infrastructure, reliability and travel times), availability of suitable accommodation, considerations of health and security and availability of reliable local businesses supporting tourism.[6] Tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation where it results in more people being able to meet their basic needs. This will generally be through increased local employment or small business opportunities linked to tourism, whether directly or through supply of goods and services to the tourism sector.

15. Some barriers preventing people from benefiting from tourism can be overcome by providing training, supporting market and product development, providing grants or loans through mechanisms to which poor people can gain access and at rates that poor people can afford, allocating secure property rights to poor people and communities, including indigenous peoples, and reforming national policies. While the tourism sector can provide training and also support market and product development, the removal of other barriers depends on actions by Governments.

16. Key lessons learned from tourism and poverty alleviation projects are that, if poor people and local and indigenous communities are to be able to benefit from the opportunities offered by tourism, there is a need to take into account commercial and market factors, which affect the successful development of tourism in any area,

[5] UNWTO, *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation — Recommendations for Action* (Madrid, 2004).

[6] UNEP, *Forging Links between Protected Areas and the Tourism Sector. How Tourism Can Benefit Conservation* (Paris, 2005).

and to address wider constraints that keep people in poverty. Furthermore, where it is identified that tourism could contribute effectively to poverty alleviation, poor people and communities should be involved in planning and decision-making concerning tourism projects and, should a project proceed, in its operational stages.

D. Tourism and indigenous peoples

17. The UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism highlights that tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women and should promote human rights and, more particularly, the individual rights of the most vulnerable groups, notably children, the elderly, the handicapped, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the specific needs of indigenous peoples and that historic injustices have prevented them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests. The Global Compact and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework (A/HRC/17/31, annex) provide a practical approach that can be applied to tackle such issues in the tourism sector and are supported through the UNWTO Tourism Partnerships for Development programme.[7]

18. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in its 2010 publication *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*, notes that indigenous peoples frequently do not benefit from tourism-related activities but do bear their costs, which can include undermining of traditional modes of sustenance, marginalization and adverse cultural effects and often are economically and culturally devastating.

19. At the same time, it is noted that tourism is not inherently negative for indigenous peoples and can be an important source of revenue and job creation, provided that indigenous peoples themselves are directly involved in all decision-making processes regarding tourism on their lands. It is also noted that it is crucial to adhere to the principle of free, prior and informed consent, ensuring that indigenous peoples are fully aware of planned tourism activities on their lands and that they themselves authorize these activities and benefit from them.

20. The same issues regarding tourism and poverty alleviation also apply in relation to tourism and indigenous peoples. Furthermore, tourism activities and development need to be conducted in a manner consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the principle of free, prior and informed consent, and with national and international legislation for protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. In addition, community access and/or ownership, especially that of local and indigenous communities, is often not well defined in legislation. Consequently, the development of tourism can be extremely problematic when lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by local people have to be altered to accommodate tourism.

21. The Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, adopted in 2004 by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision VII/14, set out the importance of, and mechanisms for, the involvement of local and indigenous communities. They highlight that impact assessment is

[7] See http://icr.unwto.org/en/content/tourpact-tourism-partnerships-development.

imperative for projects that affect the sacred sites of local and indigenous communities, in addition to the lands and waters that are traditionally occupied or used by them, and that sufficient time should be allowed to ensure that all parties are able to participate effectively in the decision-making process. In addition, in its decision VII/16 F, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention endorsed guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments regarding developments proposed to take place on, or that are likely to have an impact on, sacred sites and lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities, known as the Akwé: Kon Voluntary Guidelines. Their implementation is integrated into the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, providing a practical framework in which to tackle many key issues pertaining to tourism and indigenous peoples.

II. International initiatives relevant to ecotourism

22. UNWTO, UNEP, UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, among others, have programmes or support activities that are relevant to the ecotourism, nature-based tourism, rural tourism and community-based tourism elements of the tourism sector and to poverty alleviation. They include activities that cover tourism in natural and semi-natural habitats, community-based tourism and the role of tourism in biodiversity conservation and local economic development.

23. The International Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development, established in 2006 as part of the Marrakech Process on sustainable consumption and production, completed a three-year programme of work that resulted in the implementation of some 40 projects and actions by Task Force members and partners. In 2011, the Task Force was converted into a new global partnership for sustainable tourism to focus on policy, projects, tools and networks for all tourism stakeholders.[8]

24. The Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, as referred to in paragraph 21 of the present report, are aimed at making tourism and biodiversity more mutually supportive, engaging the private sector and local and indigenous communities, and promoting infrastructure and land-use planning based on the principles of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has also published a user's manual for the implementation of the guidelines, which contains checklists and tools that can be applied to tourism management planning at the site level and to policy development at the site, local and national levels.

25. The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, an initiative led by UNWTO and involving the participation of the United Nations Foundation, UNEP, the Rainforest Alliance and others from the private and public sector, provide a set of voluntary standards representing the minimum to which tourism businesses and destinations

[8] See www.globalsustainabletourism.com.

should aspire in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring that tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation.[9] They are consistent with the UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism. Voluntary certification schemes are now applied throughout the tourism sector and these criteria provide minimum standards for all aspects of tourism, including ecotourism.

26. The UNWTO Sustainable Tourism — Eliminating Poverty initiative[10] promotes poverty alleviation through the provision of assistance to sustainable development projects and makes a contribution to efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those dealing with poverty and hunger, gender equality, environmental sustainability and global partnership. There are now more than 100 projects in 36 developing countries, ranging from assisting communities to develop tourism products to actions to promote tourism in more remote regions with a view to enhancing its local economic impact. Projects are implemented in close collaboration with national tourism authorities, local governments, non-governmental organizations, development organizations and tourism enterprises in the beneficiary countries. In addition, the members of the initiative carry out research and publish reports to provide evidence of the impact of tourism on reducing poverty levels, accompanied by recommendations on how to maximize those impacts. Such materials include a manual on tourism and poverty alleviation that provides practical steps for destinations.

27. The theme of World Wetlands Day 2012 was wetlands and tourism. At its eleventh meeting, held in Bucharest from 6 to 13 July 2012, the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention adopted resolution XI.7 on tourism, recreation and wetlands. At the same meeting, the secretariat of the Convention launched the publication *Destination Wetlands: Supporting Sustainable Tourism*, prepared in association with UNWTO.

28. The secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species has published a report on wildlife watching and tourism.[11] The Convention supports conservation projects that include tourism components.

29. UNESCO is establishing a world heritage tourism programme and, in partnership with UNEP and with funding from the private sector and the United Nations Foundation, has carried out a project to create a model for using tourism to promote biodiversity conservation by working with local communities and site managers.

30. The Small Grants Programme is funded by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by UNDP. A total of 1,921 projects supported through the Programme have a sustainable tourism component. Some 15 per cent involve indigenous peoples and around 17 per cent are led by women. Community-based ecotourism projects are a means of reducing poverty and providing sustainable livelihoods so as to conserve biodiversity and achieve global environmental benefits. For example, the community management of protected areas conservation programme supports local and indigenous small and medium-sized enterprises working for the sustainable development of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

[9] See www.gstcouncil.org.

[10] See http://step.unwto.org/en/content/background-and-objectives.

[11] Available from www.cms.int/publications/pdf/CMS_WildlifeWatching.pdf.

31. In 2011, ILO produced a toolkit on poverty reduction through tourism in rural areas as part of its sectoral activities programme on tourism.

32. UNCTAD is carrying out activities supporting sustainable tourism for development in the least developed countries and has published an assessment of foreign direct investment in tourism and a guide for promoting such investment.

33. Established on the initiative of UNWTO in 2010, a steering committee on tourism for development currently comprises eight other United Nations entities: ILO, the International Trade Centre, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Trade Organization. It brings coherence to the efforts of its members in the area of tourism for development, enabling them to coordinate their tourism-related work and maximize its impact. This approach to achieving the Millennium Development Goals builds on the strengths and expertise of each member.

34. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific covers all aspects of poverty eradication, in addition to the promotion of the green economy in the context of inclusive and sustainable development, but does not deal directly with tourism.

III. Key considerations for the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism

A. Guidelines and regulations

35. Examples of relevant guidelines include the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development; voluntary schemes for certification and eco-labelling of sustainable tourism activities and operations, including Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria schemes; and national guidelines, frameworks and regulations covering the tourism sector and general planning, environmental and other legislation. To provide a framework for sustainable tourism, it is particularly important that tourism guidelines, regulations, planning and policies place limits on the use of ecosystem services and, consequently, on levels of development, so as to remain within sustainable levels of use. In addition, they should ensure that host communities, including local and indigenous communities, are consulted about, and able to participate in, sustainable tourism and that the wishes, cultures and social practices of such communities are respected.

B. Investment

36. It is important for sustainability to be integrated into all aspects of tourism development: from the earliest planning stages, in construction and development and in operations. Furthermore, investment in the sector should be channelled to projects and programmes that implement sustainable tourism in practice. The Sustainable Investment and Finance in Tourism Network[12] is working in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, the World Bank, the United Nations Foundation, the Global Environment Facility, UNWTO and other

[12] See www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/activities/sift.

partners to establish a common voluntary standard to encourage greater sustainability in tourism investments by public, private and multilateral investors.

C. Creating small and medium-sized enterprises

37. Small and medium-sized enterprises are important for job creation and economic development in all sectors, including the tourism sector. Many countries and development organizations support the development and strengthening of such enterprises through training, capacity-building and funding. Some programmes and initiatives, such as the UNWTO Sustainable Tourism — Eliminating Poverty initiative, may be specifically targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector.

D. Facilitating access to finance

38. Much of the economic potential for green tourism is found in small and medium-sized enterprises, which need better access to financing for investing in green tourism.[13] Their single greatest limiting factor for greening, however, is lack of access to capital. Governments and international organizations can facilitate the financial flow to these important actors with an emphasis on contributions to the local economy and poverty reduction. Public-private partnerships can spread the costs and risks of large investments in green tourism. In addition to reducing administrative fees and offering favourable interest rates for green tourism projects, in-kind support, such as technical, marketing or business administration assistance, could be of help.

E. Environmental impact assessment

39. Environmental impact assessment is generally a requirement of national planning legislation that applies to all sectors. National environmental impact assessment standards apply equally to tourism development. Projects below minimum thresholds are often not required to undertake environmental impact assessments as part of the planning process. It should be recalled, however, that the cumulative environmental and social impacts of a series of small developments, which in themselves may be below minimum thresholds for environmental impact assessments, are likely to be significant and therefore need to be taken into account before approval of any individual development is given. Since many tourism projects are initially developed on a small or medium scale, they may therefore not be required to undertake environmental impact assessments. Ideally, overall tourism development plans, based on carrying capacity considerations and market factors, should be elaborated with public participation in advance of further developments and should also be subject to strategic environmental assessments.

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[13] UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication — A Synthesis for Policy Makers* (Nairobi, 2011), chap. 11.

F. Empowerment of women

40. While no comprehensive studies of women in ecotourism have been carried out, in 2011, UNWTO and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women published a global report on women in tourism, in which it was noted that the formal and informal opportunities that tourism provided to women could have a significant impact on poverty reduction in rural communities and that the proportion of women own-account workers was much higher in tourism than in other sectors throughout all regions. It was also found that women were contributing a substantial amount of unpaid labour to home-based tourism businesses as contributing family workers and that unpaid family workers were vulnerable to exploitation. This key area requires further focus when promoting gender equality in tourism, given that women in tourism are typically earning between 10 and 15 per cent less than their male counterparts. Additional work is needed to explore and analyse the situation of women in tourism, including an examination of differences in pay and hours of work, and of women's unpaid work in family tourism businesses.

G. Participation and involvement of local and indigenous communities

41. Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders and should ensure that socioeconomic benefits are fairly distributed to all stakeholders, including local and indigenous communities. This concept is set out in the UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism and elaborated, for example, in the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, in which it is emphasized that tourism management should be based on a consultative process involving multi-stakeholder participation, including that of local and indigenous communities.

IV. Tourism and least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries

42. Tourism is a significant economic sector for many least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries. To make the most of the opportunities offered, however, the tourism sector, just as all other sectors, must tackle the many challenges in relation to sustainable development of tourism that these countries may face. Such countries must also ensure that tourism delivers actual benefits to their economies, both nationally and in the communities and localities where it takes place. The challenges faced include limited infrastructure, scant human and financial resources, vulnerability to external economic and environmental factors (including climate change), fragile environments and scarce resources, including fresh water. It is therefore vital to ensure that tourism is correctly planned in these States to avoid adverse environmental and cultural impacts and to maximize the economic and other benefits for affected communities and for national economies.

A. Least developed countries[14]

43. Tourism-related activity has been a prominent feature of economic specialization among least developed countries over the past decade. Accordingly, sustainable tourism needs to be implemented to maximize beneficial development impacts. Least developed countries continue, however, to be faced with severe constraints: for example, insufficient local savings and investment, coupled with the lack of a qualified national workforce, mean that the development of the tourism economy is largely entrusted to foreign actors, resulting in leakage from repatriation of profits and wages to the countries of origin of investors and foreign labour. Such leakage can represent up to 70 per cent of potential tourism revenue and diminishes national benefits from tourism.

44. To overcome these constraints and risks, least developed countries and economic stakeholders need to take joint action to ensure that tourism revenue is equitably shared, that a portion of the input comes from local sources and that effective partnerships are forged between foreign and domestic stakeholders. In addition, tourism, just as any other service activity, must be competitive internationally. Accordingly, the tourism sectors in least developed countries must ensure that the price and quality of their tourism products are appropriate and that they are differentiated from tourism products in competing destinations.

B. Small island developing States[15]

45. The importance of tourism for small island developing States is highlighted in both the 1994 Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the 2005 Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Tourism has contributed much to the development of such States and, as one of few development options for them, will continue to be extremely important to their future growth. A significant part of the earnings generated by tourism in these States may, however, leak out of their economies, primarily as a result of imports of goods (including food) and services, repatriation of profits by overseas resort developers and hotel owners and remittance of funds by expatriate labour. In some small island developing States, tourism leakages reach as much as 56 per cent of tourism earnings.

46. The fragility and interdependence of coastal zones and the unspoilt areas on which ecotourism is dependent call for careful management, in particular in relation to compatible land uses, water management, coastal zone management and the development of parks and protected areas. Tourism needs to be carefully integrated into the existing cultural and environmental constraints and opportunities present within small island developing States.

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[14] The analysis in this section is based on a compilation of documents of pre-conference events organized by UNCTAD in preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (http://unctad.org/en/docs/aldc2011d1_en.pdf) and the Lisbon Declaration on Sustainable Tourism for Development, UNCTAD, document TD(XI)/PC/6.

[15] The analysis in this section is based on the summary of a special event on the small island developing States tourism, biodiversity and culture nexus in the context of the green economy, held at Headquarters on 27 October 2011 and UNWTO, *Challenges and Opportunities for Tourism Development in Small Island Developing States* (Madrid, 2012).

47. Small island developing States also encounter challenges in relation to limited resources, in particular freshwater resources, and to climate change, which can exacerbate problems associated with limited water supplies and adversely affect the coastal zones that support most of the tourism activities. Furthermore, competing demands for freshwater and other scarce resources could put such resources under even more pressure. In addition to ensuring that small island developing States have sufficient financial means and technical expertise to implement policies to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change, it is also important for such policies to be compatible with the role of the tourism sector in those countries.

C. African countries

48. Africa includes many least developed countries and some small island developing States with varying levels of tourism, in addition to countries with more developed economies. Tourism is well developed in Southern and East Africa, parts of North Africa and in island States in the Indian Ocean. Least developed countries and small island developing States in Africa face constraints similar to those in other regions. Furthermore, in African countries with well-developed tourism sectors, tourism is often concentrated in a few locations, meaning that other areas may also experience problems of development, resource availability and infrastructure.

V. Key findings of the survey

A. Planning, policy and regulation

49. Of the respondent countries, 46 reported having tourism policies, 28 of which included specific components on ecotourism. Four countries said that they had no such policies. For example, among least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, the Comoros has adopted legislation for the sustainable development of tourism in general, and ecotourism, with the aim of protecting wildlife and the environment. Burkina Faso has a national policy for tourism and a sustainable tourism charter. The Gambia has developed a responsible tourism policy, a poverty eradication policy and a tourism development master plan. Within that framework, it has also developed an ecotourism strategy document. Samoa has a tourism development plan that includes an ecotourism component. In the Dominican Republic, sustainable economic development is incorporated into the concept of ecotourism. The national environmental policy of Togo includes a component on developing sustainable tourism in balance with the natural and living environment. Among other countries, ecotourism is part of the Slovenian tourism strategy for 2012-2016, while Romania has a master plan for the development of national tourism and a national strategy for the development of ecotourism. Mexico has a national development plan for tourism and a tourism sectoral programme, through which it promotes the development of nature tourism within a framework of sustainability. Austria noted that ecotourism could be regarded as a part of sustainable tourism with its three pillars (economic, ecological and sociocultural).

50. Several respondents noted that national guidelines and regulations covering all sectors and national laws covering sustainability, human rights, employment and environmental protection apply equally to the tourism sector, including ecotourism.

A total of 17 countries reported appropriate additional guidelines on ecotourism and other aspects of sustainable tourism. For example, among African countries, the Tourism Act passed by Kenya in 2011 provides for the development of guidelines and regulations for various aspects of tourism, including ecotourism, while Ethiopia has published guidelines for community-based ecotourism that encompass sustainable development and involve mechanisms to minimize and mitigate the negative impacts of ecotourism. Egypt has established ecotourism programmes in several protected areas and has drawn up guidelines for ecotourism development in parts of the Red Sea. Among small island developing States and/or least developed countries, Jamaica has formulated a draft policy framework for community-based tourism and Mauritius has established guidelines on site development and design for ecotourism development, including emphasis on zoning, physical development and environmental protection. Burundi reported that it had no ecotourism-specific regulations or guidelines but did encourage sustainable tourism in general. Among other countries, Austria and Israel have developed voluntary guidance for sustainable tourism. Austria has also developed a guidebook on energy management for hotels and restaurants that identifies the potential to save energy in tourism facilities. It is also supporting the sustainable reconstruction of some 1,000 alpine huts that provide a considerable part of the infrastructure for hiking tourism, which is extremely popular. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia and Monaco reported that they had no ecotourism-specific regulations or guidelines, but did encourage sustainable tourism in general.

51. Of the 13 least developed countries that responded, 10 have tourism policies, of which 5 (Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia and Samoa) include specific components on ecotourism. Three have no such policies. Of the eight small island developing States that responded, seven have tourism policies, of which five (the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mauritius, Samoa and Trinidad and Tobago) include specific components on ecotourism; one has no such policy. Of the 14 African countries that responded, 11 have tourism policies, of which 5 (Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana and Mauritius) include specific components on ecotourism. Three have no such policies. Of 27 other countries, 26 have tourism policies, of which 18 (Australia, Austria, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Greece, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Mexico, Nicaragua, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) include specific components on ecotourism. One has no policies on tourism or ecotourism. This indicates that lower proportions of least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries have tourism policies that include specific components on ecotourism.

B. Provision of support to small and medium-sized enterprises

52. Programmes and policies that support small and medium-sized enterprises in general apply also to tourism, including ecotourism. Some countries have specific programmes to support such enterprises in the tourism sector and, where appropriate, local and indigenous communities. Some countries may also obtain funding to support such enterprises from regional bodies or bilateral or multilateral organizations. For example, in Africa, Kenya has established a tourism trust fund to support community-based tourism projects and the Government is also securing funding for community projects from the Sustainable Tourism — Eliminating

Poverty initiative. Among small island developing States and/or least developed countries in other regions, Samoa noted that, although not sector-specific, programmes and schemes were offered locally by financial institutions, development partners and agencies to assist with the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and that assistance was available to help tourism businesses to gain access thereto. In Haiti, the Ministry of Tourism provides support to help tourism businesses to strengthen their capacity and to integrate into the tourism sector, in addition to supporting the training of young people as tourist guides. The Government of Jamaica is implementing a rural economic development initiative through a loan from the World Bank, providing financial incentives for micro and small enterprises with interests in community development through tourism and agriculture. A tourism enhancement fund also provides support to such enterprises for ecotourism investments that foster safe environmental practices.

53. Among other countries, in Brazil, the Ministry of Tourism is working with the national support service for micro and small enterprises to deliver vocational training and support to tourism businesses, including market positioning, marketing and promotion. In Colombia, a productive transformation programme encompasses the nature tourism sector and provides support to projects developed by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. In Nicaragua, small and medium-sized enterprises have access to credit for their development through a project on agritourism farms. The Ministry of Tourism of Israel provides grants and professional assistance to local entrepreneurs to develop small-scale tourism accommodation facilities and small and medium-sized tourist attractions in rural and peripheral areas. In Australia, the Government supports the development of small businesses in all sectors, including tourism, through a whole-of-government service providing essential information via the Internet on planning, starting and developing a business. Similar support is also available at the level of state and territory governments. In Austria, the Austrian Bank for Tourism Development administers the funding for small and medium-sized enterprises provided by the National Tourism Administration. It focuses on encouraging sustainability, for example, in relation to transport and energy efficiency. In Turkey, a small and medium-sized enterprise development organization contributes to strengthening such enterprises in the tourism sector, for example, by supporting financing, marketing and training. Cyprus has implemented a special financial scheme for the restoration and transformation of traditional buildings into accommodation units, restaurants, workshops and museums. The European Union Leader initiative also provides support for rural economic development through the promotion of local products and businesses.

C. Environmental impact assessment for projects

54. Tourism developments, just as all other developments, are subject to all relevant national legislation, including planning and environmental legislation and requirements for environmental impact assessment, public consultation and business and/or tourism licensing. Environmental impact assessment legislation often, however, sets a size threshold below which assessments are not generally required for developments in any sector, meaning that only larger tourism projects, including ecotourism projects, would be subject to assessments. Regardless of size, however,

all tourism developments and projects are required to comply with other relevant legislation.

55. Among African countries, in Kenya, all tourism projects are subject to environmental impact assessment before approval and all policies, plans and programmes, including in relation to tourism, are subject to strategic environmental assessment. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania conducts environmental impact assessments for tourism projects through the National Environmental Management Council and the custodians of protected areas (Tanzania National Parks, the Wildlife Division and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority) in accordance with their general management programmes and regulations. The Gambia conducted an environmental impact assessment of its tourism development master plan to optimize its planning of infrastructure development, set tourist capacity and manage the environment. All developments, including ecotourism developments, that are located in fragile and protected areas are required to undergo environmental impact assessments before and during the development process. In Togo, the Environmental Code and the National Action Plan for the Environment set an overall strategic framework for integrating environmental issues and development and the preparation and execution of programmes and projects to ensure the sound management of environmental issues. In the Niger, the Environmental Assessment and Impact Studies Office provides assessments, including in relation to the use of sites for ecotourism.

56. Among other countries, in Australia, the environmental impacts of, among others, individual ecotourism developments are assessed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and state-based environmental assessment legislation, such as the Protection of the Environment Legislation Amendment Act 2011 implemented by the government of New South Wales. In Brunei Darussalam, the Brunei Tourism Development Department and the Brunei Tourism Board work with the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources to manage the impacts of tourism and the implementation of environmental legislation such as the Forest Act. In Slovakia, individual plans of investors to build facilities that are directly or indirectly related to tourism are subject to environmental impact assessment in accordance with European Union legislation. In Israel, environmental impact assessment is required for every development project, including tourism projects, under the framework of the country's planning and building legislation. In Brazil, environmental impact assessment is an integral part of the environmental licensing process. In Nicaragua, a national target of having women make up 50 per cent of the workforce in all sectors found one of its first applications in the "Ruta del Café" ecotourism project.

D. Participation and involvement of local and indigenous communities, and empowerment of women

57. Policies to promote the full participation and involvement of local and indigenous communities and the empowerment of women cover all sectors and apply equally to sustainable development of tourism, including ecotourism. For example, a key focus of the Tourism 2020 strategy launched in Australia is to increase the quality and quantity of the country's indigenous tourism product offering and the participation of indigenous Australians in the tourism industry through the provision of programmes and resources to aid indigenous tourism

development. In Brazil, using a competitive bidding process, the Ministry of Tourism supported 50 community tourism initiatives between 2008 and 2011, including 6 in indigenous communities. In Africa, the community-based tourism framework implemented in Kenya includes the participation and involvement of local and indigenous communities. Access to affordable credit is available through the Kenya Tourist Development Corporation. Among small island developing States and/or least developed countries in other regions, the Dominican Republic noted that it had launched initiatives to promote community participation in ecotourism projects and that, during the period 2004-2006, the National Congress had declared a number of regions as ecotourism provinces. Jamaica noted that the Forestry Department had promoted the formation of local forestry management committees through which local residents were able to participate in income-earning activities, including nature tourism. Samoa has implemented tourism awareness and education programmes for all stakeholders, in particular indigenous communities, and is working with tourism developers to better understand and resolve land issues, including by providing for community engagement and acceptance, community benefits and dispute resolution. Bhutan reported that all tourism stakeholders, including local communities, were consulted from the planning phase of tourism development to implementation. Planning was often decentralized at the local government level to encourage ownership of the initiatives and sustainability.

58. With regard to the empowerment of women, among African countries, including least developed countries and small island developing States, the Government of Kenya has established the Women Enterprise Fund and the Kenya Women Finance Trust to support small and medium-sized enterprises by women. The national tourism policy of the United Republic of Tanzania takes into account the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, in collaboration with other development partners, has conducted special training programmes for women, focusing on cookery, housekeeping, customer care, tourist guiding, weaving, ceramics, bead making, tie-dye, apiculture, food processing and establishing village community banks. In the Gambia, women have been supported through training and information-sharing programmes. Among other countries, Australia has implemented a range of measures at the state/territory level, such as the Women in Micro Business Loan programme of the government of Tasmania, to encourage the involvement of women in business, including ecotourism. In Ethiopia, women and young people feature prominently in national policy and guideline documents covering all sectors.

E. Recommendations for national actions to increase the contribution of tourism to sustainable development

59. The following specific actions were overwhelmingly recommended in national responses as ways of increasing the contribution of tourism, including ecotourism, to reducing poverty, generating employment, empowering women, promoting development at the local and community levels, preserving natural and cultural heritage, including that of indigenous communities, and promoting sustainable development:

(a) Increasing cooperation with the private sector, especially small and medium-sized enterprises;

(b) Providing training for people working in the sector, such as language training and training in specific skills in tourism services;

(c) Strengthening legislative or policy frameworks and their implementation in the context of tourism for environmental protection, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, local and community development, support for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises and poverty reduction;

(d) Developing specific guidelines and awareness-raising materials;

(e) Building the capacity of Government staff and civil society;

(f) Providing incentives, such as subsidies or taxes.

60. Some respondents also drew attention to specific issues. Among African countries, the Comoros said that there was a need for training in the management of small projects and access to microcredit, the Niger called for training, monitoring and financial support for communities and Burundi stressed the importance of creating and supporting structures for the promotion of sustainable tourism. Cape Verde noted the importance of establishing inventories of natural and cultural resources for tourism, combined with a national plan for conservation and public use of protected areas. Burkina Faso suggested involving local communities, women and young people in the management of ecotourism projects. Among other countries, the United Arab Emirates said that it was important to establish a strong legal framework to safeguard valuable and vulnerable natural assets and that international conventions complemented national legislation by providing frameworks for the preservation of the environment, biodiversity and marine and coastal ecosystems. Colombia indicated that there was a need for stronger strategies for the dissemination, appropriation and application of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, suggesting that UNWTO, in coordination with its member States, could take the lead in that regard.

61. Many countries called for further training to increase the quality and availability of human resources in the tourism sector. Among least developed countries and small island developing States, the Gambia referred to supporting small businesses and community organizations to develop alternative means of generating income through tourism initiatives and developments. Trinidad and Tobago noted the importance of technical assistance, training and capacity-building for the implementation of health and safety and tourism-related standards. Yemen said that it needed significant support to build capacity and support the tourism sector as it currently had little or no tourism infrastructure. Among other countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran noted that training needed to include language and tourism-specific skills. Sri Lanka highlighted its development of homestays, handicraft villages and community tourism initiatives, while Slovenia noted the role that its national tourist association played in stimulating the involvement of local tourism associations in ecotourism development.

F. Suggested areas of assistance from the United Nations, specialized agencies and regional and international financial institutions

62. In their responses, countries also highlighted the following contributions of the United Nations, specialized agencies and regional and international financial

institutions that would be of greatest assistance in promoting sustainable tourism, including ecotourism:

(a) Assessment of greenhouse-gas emissions, water consumption and generation of solid wastes arising from the tourism sector and ways in which such impacts could be reduced, such as through environmental protection measures;

(b) Promotion and awareness-raising of good practices for sustainable tourism, in addition to the provision of technical assistance for their implementation;

(c) Provision of a platform for regional cooperation on sustainable tourism and assistance in linking existing sustainable tourism initiatives to comprehensive programmes for sustainable tourism;

(d) Support for capacity-building and financing for sustainable tourism;

(e) Support, including technical assistance, to market sustainable tourism.

63. Among African countries, including least developed countries and small island developing States, the Comoros highlighted the importance of regional cooperation between countries in the Indian Ocean on matters pertaining to tourism, the environment, agriculture and fisheries, in addition to the promotion and marketing of tourism. The Niger drew attention to the value that it gained, both generally and in relation to tourism, from its work at the international level with, among others, UNWTO, the Ramsar Convention, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Mauritius similarly noted the value of the support and technical assistance that it received from United Nations agencies, UNDP and other international organizations in implementing poverty eradication programmes and protecting the environment. Ghana pointed out the role of partnerships with international aid agencies in developing and implementing ecotourism projects, while the Gambia highlighted the value of specialized technical assistance, including in relation to access to information and development of a tourism database, improved tourism data collection and capacity-building in research methodologies. Ethiopia noted that, while that support was important, it was also limited in extent and there was a need for greater coordination between the international agencies involved. Among small island developing States and/or least developed countries in other regions, Jamaica said that United Nations agencies and regional and international financial institutions could also play significant roles in raising awareness, building capacity, providing technical assistance and assisting in marketing. Bhutan and Haiti noted the importance of overseas development aid programmes in supporting initiatives to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including in relation to the tourism sector. Bhutan also stressed that proper coordination among the stakeholders involved in tourism, including among Government agencies and with the private sector, was crucial. Trinidad and Tobago highlighted regional cooperation through the Organization of American States to establish a fund to facilitate capacity-building and training among member States in the area of tourism in an effort to alleviate poverty and through the Association of Caribbean States to promote initiatives for the sustainable development of the local tourism sector.

64. Among other countries, the United Arab Emirates noted the contribution that the United Nations, specialized agencies and regional and international financial institutions could make to the preservation of the environment and avoidance of

environmental hazards. Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) drew attention to the important role that the United Nations, specialized agencies and regional and international financial institutions played in the sharing and transfer of knowledge and best practice. The Islamic Republic of Iran suggested that those organizations should strengthen implementation of sustainable tourism by targeting the tourism industry and by undertaking appropriate educational projects. Brunei Darussalam suggested that those organizations could assist in the promotion of responsible behaviour by tourists and of standards or benchmarks for sustainable tourism practices globally. Slovenia noted the role of those organizations in delivering guidelines and tools, and of financial instruments aimed at stimulating green growth in the context of tourism. Romania called for better coordination and cooperation within the European Union, and also between Union strategies, policies and actions, on the one hand, and the programmes of other international structures and agencies, on the other, in order to have a more coherent approach to actions in the field of sustainable tourism. In 2011, international cooperation led Romania and Slovakia, along with five other States parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, to sign the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism. Under article 26 of the Protocol, with the objective to plan, develop and manage tourism activities in the Carpathians in an ecological, economic and socially sustainable manner, States parties are to promote the integration of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development in the development or review of their strategies and plans for tourism development in the Carpathians and other related sectoral strategies.

65. A number of developed countries highlighted their roles as donors and providers of bilateral support. Austria noted that, through the Austrian Development Cooperation, it supported countries in Africa, Asia, Central America and South-Eastern and Eastern Europe in their sustainable social, economic and democratic development. Monaco highlighted the technical assistance that it provided with regard to environmental protection and sustainable tourism, while Finland noted its support for and cooperation with many United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in addition to international financial institutions, in poverty eradication and environmental protection. Australia drew attention to its engagement on sustainable tourism issues at the multilateral level through its membership of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Tourism Working Group, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Tourism Committee and UNWTO, and on poverty reduction, environment protection and climate change adaptation through its international aid agency, AusAID.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

66. National tourism plans, programmes and policies integrate ecotourism into the framework of sustainable tourism, which applies to all tourism subsectors.

67. The market for tourism is highly dynamic. Accordingly, it is important for national tourism plans and policies to take into account market trends in the types of tourism demanded by consumers and to focus on those subsectors of tourism in which they have a competitive advantage, in addition to ensuring that tourism activities and development are sustainable in the long term, including by ensuring environmental protection, respect for local and

indigenous communities and generation of benefits for local economic development.

68. **The effectiveness of tourism in contributing to poverty alleviation depends on obtaining an in-depth understanding of the specific social and livelihood context of the poor communities or groups that it is intended to help, and subsequently developing projects taking into account those factors, and on a realistic assessment of the market opportunities for tourism that can potentially be provided by these communities or groups, their existing capacity and assets, and the support and capacity-building that they will need to be effective in using such capacity and assets to provide commercially viable tourism products.**

69. **In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, emphasis is laid on the importance of establishing, where necessary, appropriate guidelines and regulations in accordance with national priorities and legislation for promoting and supporting sustainable tourism. In that light, and to promote sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, as a tool to combat poverty and to encourage sustainable development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, in addition to future sustainable development goals, the General Assembly may wish to consider:**

(a) **Inviting Governments, international agencies and other relevant organizations to carry out evaluations of the effectiveness of various types of tourism, including ecotourism, nature-based, rural and community-based tourism, and of various tourism business models in terms of alleviating poverty, protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Such work could be used to identify best practice and key success factors and to develop indicators to assess circumstances, including those of local and indigenous communities and environmental considerations, in which particular types of tourism and tourism business models may be most appropriate;**

(b) **Encouraging Governments, national and regional tourism agencies, tourism businesses and tourism business organizations to expand and strengthen the incorporation of materials to raise awareness of important natural and cultural features, in addition to ways in which tourists can help to protect such features and to support local communities and businesses, into all types of tourism;**

(c) **Inviting Governments, international agencies and other relevant organizations to highlight and support best practices in relation to the implementation of relevant guidelines in the tourism sector and to implement and disseminate more widely existing guidelines, including:**

(i) **Guidelines that specifically address the tourism sector, such as the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism, the UNWTO mechanisms for poverty alleviation through tourism and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;**

(ii) **Other relevant guidelines and frameworks, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Global Compact and the UNWTO Tourism Partnerships for Development programme that supports the**

application of the Global Compact and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the tourism sector, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the Akwé: Kon Voluntary Guidelines;

(d) Emphasizing that, where projects use tourism as a tool to support poverty alleviation, environmental protection and/or biodiversity conservation, the tourism components should have clear evidence of market demand and a sound economic base;

(e) Encouraging Governments, the tourism sector and relevant organizations to adopt and implement policies and practices to promote the full participation and involvement of local and indigenous communities, in addition to the full empowerment of women, in all tourism operations and development, including ecotourism activities, and to integrate poverty alleviation, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation considerations into national and local sustainable tourism plans and into planning and decisions on tourism development;

(f) Inviting Governments and the tourism sector to cooperate in supporting local and indigenous communities and peoples to participate in the tourism sector by obtaining employment and/or establishing tourism businesses, including through provision of training, support for market and product development, provision of grants or loans through mechanisms to which poor people can gain access and at rates that poor people can afford, allocation of secure property rights to poor people and communities, including indigenous peoples, and reform of national policies, as appropriate;

(g) Inviting relevant specialized agencies, United Nations bodies, other organizations and multilateral financial institutions to provide technical assistance to Governments to assist, as appropriate, in:

(i) Strengthening legislative or policy frameworks and their implementation in the context of tourism, including those for environmental protection, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, local and community development, support for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises and poverty reduction;

(ii) Building capacity to implement sustainable tourism policies;

(iii) Developing specific guidelines and awareness-raising materials;

(iv) Providing financing for sustainable tourism, including ecotourism;

(h) Inviting the United Nations, specialized agencies and other relevant organizations to further assess greenhouse-gas emissions, water consumption and generation of solid and liquid wastes arising from the tourism sector, in addition to ways in which those could be reduced, such as through regulation and other environmental protection measures.